Title: Raised a discussion regarding increasing atrocities on women. (Not Concluded).

17.27 hrs

MR. SPEAKER: The House shall now take up item No.9 - Discussion under Rule 193. Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (PANSKURA): Sir, I rise to initiate the discussion under Rule 193 on increasing atrocities on women, with a heavy heart. With a heavy heart because even after fifty years of our Independence, atrocities on women are on the increase; with a heavy heart also because this Discussion could not be taken up on time through the Discussions on the other two issues -- flood situation and Maruti Udyog -- could be taken up on time. This would send a wrong signal to the women in the country as to how Parliament feels about women.

Sir, before I go into the details of the discussion, I appeal to all Members of the House to look at this problem not from the point of view of politicising it and using it for political purposes. I am absolutely sure that only the united effort of all political parties rising above petty political considerations, the united effort of all the organisations of women, youth, students, kisans, labourers, agricultural labourers and other social Fprces and the goodwill of all people together can create an atmosphere in which atrocities on women will be effectively fought against.

We must admit that the situation as it exists now is not bad.

Let us all admit that we have not been able to do what we should do for women and for mitigating the atrocities against women. Why am I saying this? It is only with the feeling that if we approach this question in right perspective, maybe we shall be able to go somewhere and take some steps which really will mitigate, at least, the atrocities.

17.30 hrs (Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey in the Chair)

Atrocities are of various types, viz. rape, gangrape, molestation, even of minor girls. Yesterday, I read in the newspapers that a Ninety-year old woman was raped. What is this going on? Just see, women of nine years, seven years and ninety years. Then parading women nude is a new phenomenon which is now growing. Sale of girls to brothels, sale of girls in foreign countries, sexual harassment of women at work places, physical and mental torture by husband and husband's family, torture for dowry, abandoning the wife in a helpless condition, etc. are increasing every year.

I would have given the statistics but I think, that it is not full. Even then what they reveal is really something about which we should all be seriously thoughtful. Just see the figures. Despite the fact that all the cases are not reported at all, particularly in the backward States, let us see the figures of rape cases. What is the situation?

The all India figures: 12,992 in 1995, 13,531 in 1996, and 14,215 in 1997. Every year it is increasing. Sir,these are not the complete figures as they are not always reported. Rajasthan: 1036 in 1995, 1162 in 1996, 1255 in 1997. Maharashtra: 1322 in 1995, 1408 in 1996, 1206 in 1997. Uttar Pradesh: 1800 in 1995, 1741 in 1996, and 1390 in 1997. Madhya Pradesh: 3023 in 1995, 3007 in 1996, and 3011 in 1997. Bihar: 907 in 1995, 859 in 1996, and 1189 in 1997 -- obviously all cases are not reported.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): It is because all men are engaged otherwise.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (PANSKURA): Well, it is up to the men. As I said in the very beginning, it does not gave good message to the country.

Then I come to Delhi, which is a much small State. As you all know, I need not give the figures. Everyday when you open the newspaper, there is a page on crimes committed in the State. Now, this is the situation that we are

in. It is also true that sometimes some political party workers are also involved in such cases and unfortunately, they get protection. I am not saying about a particular party, they may belong to any party.

This must be stopped. This is the first step. To begin with, all the political parties have to stop this. You stop giving any protection to those criminals who go in for atrocities against women, who rape them, who molest them and who make them parade nakedly. You stop them at least.

Secondly, as I have already said, there should not be any politicisation of this issue. We have to rise above petty political considerations, and we all have to act together.

As far as the laws are concerned, there are some excellent laws to deal with cases of atrocities against women. They have been passed by this very Parliament. I came in 1980. From 1980 to 1985, we passed plethora of excellent laws. For example, we have law on dowry death. There are a very few laws like that. Within certain years of married life, if some death takes place, the police has to take suo motu action. Do the police take suo motu action? No. I am sorry to say that in a very few cases, suo motu action is taken. Very often, the implementation of these laws is not only tardy but it is not done at all. What is the good of having excellent laws? What is the good of wasting the money of the public by discussion, etc? This is the situation. What is to be done about that? Moreover, if one goes to the court, what happens? If one goes to the court, he finds it that the procedure is so cumbersome. It takes such a long time that it leads to `justice delayed is justice denied.' If a case goes on for 10 years, then what is the good of winning the case? After that, very often, the accused is let off. So, this is mostly the situation. If you compare it with the cases that are filed and the persons who are convicted, they are very few. This is a very sad situation.

Sometimes, the Government takes no care about these cases. Witnesses are threatened. Consequently, the case falls through. There are umpteen number of cases where the victims find it difficult even to lodge an FIR because the police is influenced either by bribe or by some other means. So, naturally, these things happen.

We have been demanding separate courts for women. But how many States have courts only for women? Very few. That is the position. So long as courts for women are not established, then, at least, do one thing. In the normal court, fix up a particular day where only cases of atrocities of all kinds against women should be taken up, so that these cases can be expedited. Even this suggestion has not been generally accepted. I am again putting it for your consideration.

As regards the question of implementation, everybody knows that the first job is to sensitize the police and bureaucracy. Of course, the first thing is to sensitize ourselves and then only police and bureaucracy. Sensitization of police and bureaucracy is absolutely essential.

More power should be given to the National and State Women Commissions because Women Commissions are correctly saying that they have really no power. They say that they can just hear and then, they can only request the Government. If the Government does not do anything, then, they are in no position to solve the problem. The Women Commission was formed with an idea of implementing the laws. Now, if this is the position in the Women Commission, how will they implement the laws?

It is very clear that the powers given at present to the Women's Commission are not at all enough. We should certainly think how we can give more powers to it so that it can also take some action. We have to think over it. I am not in a position to give a simple solution to do like this or like that. This has to be thought over.

Then comes the question of Women's Commissioners. A lot was talked about appointing them. That was also not put to practice. Even that has to be done. It may be done quickly, and powers may be given so that they also do something. That has never been done. Why has it not been given?

Then come women's cells in the Police Stations. How many Police Stations have women's cells? And then how many women Police Stations exclusively are there? All this was talked about many times. But talking is one thing and doing is another. I am sorry that talking is more, doing is very little. That is the position.

About sale of children to brokers and other countries, seldom has there been any intervention on the part of the Government. In how many cases have the criminals been caught?. Some have taken them to Arab countries. Only a very few of them have been caught. Inside the country nobody has been caught. Practically nobody. They get away with impunity.

Then comes the media. Sensitisation is needed not only of bureaucracy but also of media. I feel that our media should cooperate in this, because they have a powerful way of sensitisation and I must thank the electronic media and now the print media for the way they have given us support for the Women's Reservation Bill. I hope that in future also they will do the same for atrocities against women.

Then about sexual harassment in workplaces, everybody knows that whether it is brick kilns or offices, hundreds of cases come to us. I am sure that our other sisters also know how in workplaces women are sexually abused. Unless they sexually please their bosses, they are either downgraded or some case is started against them. Or some victimisation is there. Of course, this is a very very serious situation because in our country, though women have not become economically independent or self-sufficient, in the villages a lot of women work in snall industries, in the informal sector. There molestation and that kind of sexual abuse is very much there; it is there also in the upper sections of the work, be it Government or be it any other private organisation.

In this connection I would like to remind the House that the hon. Supreme Court had in its judgment delivered on August l3, l997 directed all employers including the Centre, the States, public sector undertakings and enterprises to create suitable mechanism and take appropriate steps for preventing sexual harassment of women in workplaces.

They delivered a 23-page judgment. I am not going to read all the 23 pages but I quote one paragraph:

"It shall be the duty of the employer or their responsible persons in workplaces or other institutions to prevent or determine commission of acts of social harassment and provide the procedure for resolution, settlement, of prosecution of acts of sexual harassment by making all steps required."

But what has been done after that? It is an absolutely clear judgment. Has the Government done anything? It has done nothing. Have the PSUs done anything? They have done nothing. Regarding the private enterprises, the less said the better. Who is going to catch them? Therefore, the harassment is going on as earlier. Should the Government not have evolved some mechanism after the judgment? Should it not be done now at least without delay? But it is better late than never. Now, at least, please take some steps according to the judgment so that something can be done about it.

Now, let us take the question of dowry deaths. I have said that despite the excellent law, a very few cases are dealt with successfully. Apart from sensitising the administration for promptly taking up the cases, according to the law, the biggest necessity is of setting up example by not taking and giving dowry. Do the politicians try that? Mostly not. Can we not take a vow that we shall try our best not to take or give dowry? We can adopt a resolution to that effect in Parliament. (Interruptions). I would like to say that black money in dowry should not be practised. (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please address the Chair.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: I would suggest that a plan of action be prepared which can coordinate all the aspects in which the Government and the popular organisations can cooperate.

Last but not least, the way you have dealt with the Women's Reservation Bill, by not letting it even being introduced in the House, has roused this question among various people whether this is also not a piece of atrocity on women. Therefore, I would request that in order to give proper signal to the people, you kindly get the Bill introduced in the next week.

Sir, with these words, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion.

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श्री शरद पवार (बारामती) : सभापति महोदय, इस सदन के सामने श्रीमती गीता मुखर्जी द्वारा नियम १९३ के अधीन महिलाओं पर बढ़ते हुये अत्याचार के बारे में एक बहुत ही ज्वलंत और राष्ट्रीय समस्या पर अपने विचार रखे हैं, मैं उसका समर्थन करने के लिये खड़ा हुआ हूं।

मेरी मान्यता यह है कि भारत जैसे देश में महिलाओं की जहां ५० प्रतिशत आबादी है, उनसे जब तक हम समान व्यवहार नहीं करेंगे, उनकी प्रतिष्ठा समाज में नहीं करेंगे, समता का व्यवहार जब तक उनसे नहीं करेंगे, तब तक इस समाज और देश का भविष्य मुझे ठीक नहीं दिखाई देता।

यहां जो कुछ बातें अत्याचार के बारे में सामने आईं, अत्याचार के अलग-अलग पहलू हो सकते हैं - वे सामाजिक अत्याचार हो सकते हैं, कुछ शारीरिक अत्याचार होते हैं, मानसिक अत्याचार होते हैं, सेवा विषयक अत्याचार होते हैं, मीडिया के माध्यम से भी अत्याचार होते हैं और शिक्षा क्षेत्र में भी अत्याचार होते हैं। यहां जो आंकड़े दिये गए, उनसे सभी लोगों को सोचने को मजबूर होना पड़ा है कि जहां दिन प्रति दिन एक तरफ हम आर्थिक प्रगति के रास्ते पर जा रहे हैं, शिक्षा का ि वस्तार करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं वहीं दूसरी तरफ समाज में महिलाओं पर अत्याचारों की संख्या जगह-जगह पर बढ़ रही है। यह सब देखने के बाद जब मैं बैठा तो मैंने एक बात मन में तय की कि इसे मैं राजनीतिक दृष्टि से नहीं देखता कि कौन सी पार्टी किस राज्य में हुकूमत में है। ठीक है, आज एक पार्टी है, कल दूसरी पार्टी हो सकती है, मगर जो आंकड़े दिखाई देते हैं, जिसके बारे में कुछ जानकारी आपके सामने श्रीमती गीता मुखर्जी ने रखी, गहराई से देखने के बाद परिस्थिति का गांभीर्य सदन के सामने रखना मैं अपना फर्ज समझता हूं।

पूरे देश में पिछले पांच साल में **Rape, kidnapping, dowry deaths, torture, molestation, sexual harassment and crimes under special laws** में ५६ प्रतिशत बढ़ोतरी हुई है और कई राज्यों में इस बढ़ोतरी का परिमाण बहुत ज्यादा है। कुछ राज्यों पर हमें ज्यादा ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है जिसमें महाराष्ट्र, उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश, राजस्थान, आंध्र प्रदेश और दिल्ली तथा कर्नाटक हैं।

एक माननीय सदस्य : उड़ीसा भी है।

श्री शरद पवार : उड़ीसा की रिपोर्टस नहीं आई होंगी, मगर इन क्षेत्रों की परिस्थिति सभी राज्यों के मुकाबले बहुत ही गंभीर दिखाई देती है। जो नेशनल क्राइम रिसर्च ब्यूरो भारत सरकार की संस्था है, उसने जो फिगर्स दी हैं, उन्हें देखने के बाद एक बाद उन्होंने सरकार के सामने रखा कि इस देश में हर ५० मिनट में एक बलात्कार होता है, हर दो घंटे में एक डाउरी डेथ होती है, हर ४० मिनट में एक अपहरण का केस होता है, हर २७ मिनट में एक शीलभंग या मोलॅस्टेशन का केस होता है, हर ५० मिनट में महिलाओं को छेड़ने का एक केस होता है।

हर तीस मिनट के बाद महिला के साथ भयंकर व्यवहार का एक केस इस देश में होता है। ये सब फीगर्स देखने के बाद यह मालूम होता है कि इस समस्या का स्वरूप दिन-ब-दिन कितना गंभीर हो रहा है। इसमें पहली बात यह है कि जब तक समाज में रहने वाले ५० प्रतिशत पुरुषों की दृष्टि महिलाओं के बारे में बदलने में हम कामयाब नहीं होते, तब तक इसमें सुधार होने की परिस्थिति मुझे दिखायी नहीं देती है। महिलाओं की तरफ देखने की हमारी दृष्टि ठीक नहीं है। कुछ लोग आज भी महिलाओं को माल-मत्ता समझते हैं, प्रोपर्टी समझते हैं। पुराना इतिहास देखने के बाद मैं किसी व्यक्ति या संत-महंत का नाम यहां नहीं लेना चाहता हूं, लेकिन हमारे इतिहास में लिखा गया है कि यह महान व्यक्ति था, उसके पास बहुत बड़ी हुकूमत थी और उसने गरीबों की सेवा करने के लिए अपनी पत्नी का त्याग किया। हम इतिहास में देखते और पढ़ते हैं कि किसी स्त्री के बारे में यदि समाज में कोई शक किया गया तो उसको आदेश दिया गया कि आप अग्निपरीक्षा करिये। मैंने इतिहास में यह कभी नहीं पढ़ा और न ही मेरे पास कोई सूचना है कि किसी पुरुष ने आज तक कभी अग्निपरीक्षा दी हो। लेकिन यह अग्निपरीक्षा सीता पर करने का काम इस देश में हुआ था। यह मानसिकता ही खराब है। आज हमारे समाज में महिलाओं की स्थिति खराब है, उनका स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व मानने के लिए आज का समाज तैयार नहीं है। महिला किसी की लड़की हो सकती है, किसी की पत्नी हो सकती है या किसी की मां हो सकती है। लेकिन उसका स्वतंत्र व्यक्तित्व मानने की आज हमारे समाज की धारणा नहीं है। आप कही भी देखिये कि आज भी हमारे देश में सबसे ज्यादा मेहनत करने का हिस्सा महिलाओं का होता है। फूड एंड एग्रीकल्चर ऑर्गेनाइजेशन (

FAO)

दुनिया में एक संगठन है। उसने दुनिया में खेती के क्षेत्र में मेहनत करने वाले लोगों के हिस्से के बारे में कुछ आंकड़े इकट्ठे किये हैं। जिसमें यह दिखाई देता है कि दुनिया में जितना अनाज पैदा होता है, इस अनाज की पैदावारी को तैयार करने में ७० प्रतिशत श्रम महिलाओं का होता है और इस श्रम से पैदा होने वाले अनाज का १२ प्रतिशत हिस्सा उनके पास जाता है, यानी मेहनत की पूरी जिम्मेदारी हम लोगों ने महिलाओं के ऊपर छोड़ दी, मगर इस मेहनत का जो फल आता है, डेवलपिंग कंट्रीज में समाज खास तौर से उनका हिस्सा उन्हें देने के लिए तैयार नहीं है। यह भी महिलाओं के ऊपर एक अलग तरह का अत्याचार ही है। इसके बारे में कई कदम उठाने की आवश्यकता मुझे दिखायी देती है। शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में कदम उठाने की आवश्यकता है। आप किसी भी लैंग्वेज की किताब को देखिये, उस किताब के द्वारा जो कुछ हम नई पीढ़ी को सिखाते हैं, उसमें भले ही हम महिलाओं पर अच्छी तरह से गौरव करते हैं, लेकिन कई जगहों पर उनका उल्लेख इस तरह से करते हैं कि जिससे नई पीढ़ी के मन में 'स्त्री के समान अधिकार हैं', यह मानसिकता तैयार करने के लिए यह शिक्षा भी उनको मदद नहीं करती है।

18.00 hrs.

सभापति महोदय : चूंकि हम एक महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर चर्चा कर रहे हैं और इस चर्चा में कई माननीय सदस्य भाग लेना चाहते हैं तथा माननीय शरद पवार जी का भी भाषण अभी अधूरा है। इसलिए यदि यह सदन सहमत हो, तो इसको हम कल ले लें और कल शरद पवार जी अपना भाषण जारी रखें।

कुछ माननीय सदस्यः हां ठीक है।

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Sir, there should be no `Zero Hour' tomorrow so that this discussion could start again immediately after the Question Hour.

18.01 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on

Friday, July 24, 1998/Shravana 2, 1920 (Saka)

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